

Senator Catherine Osten, Senator Paul Formica & Representative Toni Walker,

I am writing this letter as a means to explain why our magnet schools need to continue to be funded and maintained at the level as they always have been here in our State. As a product of the Project Concern and Open Choice programs, I have seen the benefits firsthand from attending school in the suburbs throughout my entire life and career, and this standard of choice should be upheld for all children, let alone those already afforded their spot in the educational lottery process.

Many African American and Puerto Rican children will be greatly affected by the decisions made by your staff. After already having to overcome cultural differences, racism and poverty, parents now have to wonder as to how they can make sure their children have an even playing field, something that should be afforded at the highest quality to every individual on this planet. How can doubts regarding transportation even present themselves when the future depends on these children? With City of Hartford schools closing and decisions being made by people with six figure salaries continue, where is the relief? Some parents within the inner cities place their children into these programs for fear of lack of funding and proper education that they would receive from the public education system; now parents have to fear whether a bus will be provided to their child, and if not, possibly have to forfeit their child's opportunity for growth. These programs were put into place to BRIDGE the gaps since 1966 (achievement=no poverty=success for all.) Are these gaps no longer wanted? Or is there a benefit from these gaps? If so, what has been the purpose of these programs all along? Reduced funding should not even become a question when it comes to education, as when people become educated they become better civilians in society. Is that not what this State and Country wants and needs?

Without the Open Choice program, so many black children would not have considered college. So many black children like me would not know what it is like to interact with children of other races and even have an interest in learning things they have never been exposed to. Keeping children separated is not the answer for our State. It creates chaos, havoc and an unbalanced economy. We

should be encouraging more growth, more need for transportation, more learning and more jobs!

I have watched my daughter, who has been at CREC Reggio Magnet School of the Arts now for 2 years, grow so mature, with a wide array of friends, and so interested in reading and doing math. We have become so acclimated to her school environment and the teachers are so hands on in truly ensuring that each kid learns up and past their potential, it's amazing. While we would hope all schools were this way, this is not the reality, but the CREC Magnet Schools are this way and lead by example! My daughter has become a leader in her class and enjoys taking the bus each day to school and home. With costs of school lunch, school after care programs, being a single parent and many other costs, including state taxes, the State must do its part to continue to invest in our children. It is sad enough to see City of Hartford schools in the shape that they are in, and mostly always have been, as resources and the positive drive continue to be pushed away from the people mostly in our Communities. Some family's drive their students as it is from all over the State to allow their children certain access to education, but how many can afford to do this? Why should this be necessary and why should schools have to compete for resources they receive?

I urge you, as a parent, to greatly ensure that our magnet schools are preserved, and that all children involved continue to have equal and open access to education.

Thank you,

Chanel Clancy